

## Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SES-02 SAA-01 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-08

INR-10 LAB-04 NSAE-00 SIL-01 OMB-01 DODE-00 PM-05

H-01 L-03 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11 /081 W

-----076385 110521Z /10

R 110415Z SEP 78

FM AMEMBASSY MANAMA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6601

INFO AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI

AMEMBASSY AMMAN

USINT BAGHDAD

AMEMBASSY DOHA

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 MANAMA 2002

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ELAB, BA

SUBJECT: QUESTIONS ON PALESTINIAN POPULATION CONCENTRATIONS

LOCATED IN MIDDLE EAST COUNTRIES

REF: STATE 218639

FOLLOWING IS EMBASSY MANAMA'S RESPONSE KEYED TO  
QUESTIONS IN REFTEL:

(A) THE TOTAL PALESTINIAN POPULATION RESIDING IN BAHRAIN  
IN SEPTEMBER 1978 DOES NOT EXCEED 1500 PERSONS COMPRISED  
OF 200-ODD FAMILY UNITS. THE BIRTH RATE AMONG THE  
PALESTINIAN COMMUNITY DOES NOT DIFFER APPRECIABLY FROM  
THAT OF THE LOCAL POPULATION. HOWEVER, THE  
PALESTINIAN POPULATION HAS DECREASED FROM APPROXIMATELY  
2600 IN 1975 TO THE CURRENT 1500 AS MANY HAVE DEPARTED  
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BAHRAIN TO SEEK BETTER ECONOMIC PROSPECTS IN KUWAIT  
AND THE UNITED ARAB EMIRATES. IN GENERAL, ALL HEADS  
OF PALESTINIAN FAMILIES IN BAHRAIN ARE GAINFULLY EMPLOYED.  
GROWN CHILDREN OF PALESTINIAN FAMILIES ARE ALSO ABLE  
TO OBTAIN EMPLOYMENT IN THE BAHRAIN ECONOMY.

(B) PALESTINIAN WORKERS IN BAHRAIN ARE EMPLOYED IN THE

CONSTRUCTION FIELD AS SKILLED LABORERS AND MECHANICS, IN THE SERVICE FIELD AS ACCOUNTANTS, SURVEYORS AND MANAGERS. MANY ARE EMPLOYED BY THE GOVERNMENT OF BAHRAIN IN THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AS TEACHERS AND IN TRAINING POSITIONS IN THE BAHRAIN DEFENSE FORCE IN FIELDS SUCH AS ACCOUNTING AND WAREHOUSING. THE AGE OF PALESTINIAN WORKERS IN BAHRAIN GENERALLY RANGE BETWEEN 25-40 YEARS AND THEIR AVERAGE LENGTH OF STAY IN BAHRAIN WOULD BE APPROXIMATELY 4 YEARS. WAGES FOR PALESTINIAN WORKERS RANGE FROM A MINIMUM OF \$7 900 MONTHLY TO \$7 2500-5000 MONTHLY FOR HIGHLY SKILLED LABORERS, CONSULTANTS AND ENGINEERS IN THE CONSTRUCTION FIELD. THERE ARE PERHAPS A DOZEN RELATIVELY HIGH PROFILE PALESTINIAN BUSINESS LEADERS AND GULF AIR EXECUTIVES WHO COULD EARN EVEN HIGHER COMPENSATION. AS THE COST OF LIVING IS HIGH IN BAHRAIN, CONSUMPTION WOULD ACCOUNT FOR APPROXIMATELY 50 PERCENT OF THE WAGES OF PALESTINIAN WORKERS. THE OTHER 50 PERCENT IS REPATRIATED, USUALLY TO JORDAN FOR FAMILIES OR INVESTMENT.

(C) SINCE 1973 THERE HAS BEEN A DECREASE IN DEMAND FOR PALESTINIAN LABOR IN BAHRAIN. SINCE THE 1975 EGYPTIAN-SAUDI ARABIAN REAPPROACHMENT IN PARTICULAR, BAHRAINI HAVE SOUGHT EGYPTIANS TO FILL MANY POSITIONS FORMERLY HELD BY PALESTINIANS, BOTH IN THE PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTORS. THIS IS PROBABLY DUE TO A NUMBER OF

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FACTORS BUT SAUDI ARABIAN/EGYPTIAN URGING AND THE BAHRAINI BELIEF THAT EGYPTIAN LABOR WAS MORE POLITICALLY RELIABLE THAN PALESTINIAN ARE CERTAINLY MAJOR FACTORS.

(D) THERE ARE NO TANGIBLE LEGAL OR SOCIAL RESTRICTIONS PLACED ON PALESTINIAN WORKERS AND THEIR FAMILIES THAT ARE NOT ENCOUNTERED BY OTHER NON-BAHRAINI. HOWEVER, THERE IS AN UNDEFINED AND INTANGIBLE EFFORT TO DENY "NO OBJECTION CERTIFICATES" TO PALESTINIAN WORKERS WHICH IS IMPLEMENTED THROUGH IMMIGRATION AND SECURITY MEASURES. THIS BIAS IS UNDOUBTEDLY A RESULT OF THE BAHRAINI AWARENESS OF THE POLITICAL RAMIFICATIONS OF A LARGE PALESTINIAN COMMUNITY SUCH AS EXISTS IN KUWAIT. PALESTINESE CHILDREN BORN IN BAHRAIN ARE ENTITLED TO APPLY FOR BAHRAINI CITIZENSHIP BUT SINCE THIS DOES NOT APPLY TO THE PARENTS, FEW APPLY. APPROXIMATELY 90 PERCENT OF THE PALESTINIANS IN BAHRAIN CARRY JORDANIAN PASSPORTS.

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 MANAMA 2002

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y TEXT (PARA H)

(E) IN ITS EMPLOYMENT POLICIES, THE GOVERNMENT OF  
BAHRAIN IS FOLLOWING A POLICY OF BAHRAINIZATION WHICH  
WILL EVENTUALLY AFFECT ALL NON-BAHRAINI EMPLOYMENT IN  
THE COUNTRY. MANY PALESTINIANS IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR  
ARE LIKELY TO LOSE THEIR JOBS IN THE NEXT FIVE YEARS  
BUT NOT NECESSARILY AT A RATE FASTER THAN OTHER  
EXPATRIATES. IF THE ECONOMIC SLOWDOWN PERSISTS IN  
BAHRAIN, THERE WILL NOT BE OTHER LOCAL EMPLOYMENT  
OPPORTUNITIES AVAILABLE FOR PALESTINIAN WORKERS. THEIR  
EMPLOYMENT POSITION, HOWEVER, WILL NOT DIFFER SIGNIFICANTLY  
FROM THE REMAINDER OF THE EXPATRIATE POPULATION.

(F) BAHRAINI NATIONALS RESENT ALL EXPATRIATE LABORERS  
TO SOME EXTENT BUT WITH NO SPECIAL BIAS TOWARD PALESTIN-  
IANS. GENERALLY, BAHRAINIS BELIEVE THAT THERE ARE TOO  
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MANY EXPATRIATE WORKERS HOLDING JOBS THAT BAHRAINIS  
COULD AND SHOULD HANDLE. BAHRAINIS ALSO FEEL THAT THE  
GOVERNMENT, AS WELL AS THE PRIVATE SECTOR, SHOW FAVORITISM

TO EXPATRIATE LABORERS BY PAYING THEM HIGHER WAGES AND ALSO VARIOUS ALLOWANCES THAT ARE NOT PAID TO BAHRAINI LABORERS.

(G) FREE PUBLIC ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION IS AVAILABLE TO PALESTINIAN YOUTH ON THE SAME BASIS AS TO BAHRAINI YOUTH. STATE SCHOLARSHIPS FOR HIGHER EDUCATION ARE RESTRICTED TO BAHRAINI CITIZENS AND THEREFORE NOT AVAILABLE TO PALESTINIAN YOUTH. THERE IS NO LOCAL UNIVERSITY BUT PALESTINIAN YOUTH ARE ALLOWED TO ENTER THE GULF TECHNICAL COLLEGE SUBJECT TO A 5 PERCENT QUOTE THOUGH FEW HAVE APPLIED FOR ENTRANCE. THERE IS NO QUOTA SYSTEM IN THE PUBLIC EDUCATION SECTOR. ALMOST ALL RESIDENT PALESTINIAN YOUTH ATTEND SECONDARY SCHOOL IN BAHRAIN. FURTHERMORE, THE MAJORITY OF PALESTINIAN YOUTH ATTEND UNIVERSITIES ABROAD. IN ORDER OF FAVORITISM THE PREFERRED LOCATIONS FOR UNIVERSITY STUDY ARE, THE UNITED STATES AND THE UNITED KINGDOM. IF UNABLE TO QUALIFY FOR UNIVERSITIES IN THESE LOCATIONS, THEY WILL CHOOSE UNIVERSITIES IN EGYPT OR LEBANON.

(H) THERE ARE NO DECLARED PLANS BY THE GOVERNMENT OF BAHRAIN TO RESTRICT THE NUMBER OF WORKING PALESTINIANS IN THE COUNTRY. HOWEVER, THROUGH THE APPLICATION OF IMMIGRATION AND SECURITY PROCEDURES, IT IS EXPECTED THAT THE NUMBER OF PALESTINIANS EMPLOYED IN BAHRAIN WILL GRADUALLY DECREASE OVER THE NEXT FIVE YEARS.

(I) PALESTINIAN WORKERS INDEPENDENTLY HAVE BEEN SEEKING EMPLOYMENT IN NEIGHBORING COUNTRIES. THIS IS DUE TO CONFIDENTIAL

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THE FACT THAT THE WEALTHIER NEIGHBORS OF BAHRAIN PAY HIGHER WAGES AND ARE ABLE TO PROVIDE BETTER LIVING CONDITIONS THAN CAN BAHRAIN. THIS IS PARTICULARLY TRUE OF KUWAIT AND THE UNITED ARAB EMIRATES.

(J) PALESTINIAN WORKERS IN BAHRAIN LIVE IN HOUSING COMPARABLE TO BAHRAINIS AND OTHER EXPATRIATE WORKERS IN THE COUNTRY. THERE ARE NO PALESTINIAN NEIGHBORHOODS. THERE ARE NO REFUGEE CAMPS IN BAHRAIN.

(K) CITIZENSHIP REQUIREMENTS ARE VERY STRICT IN BAHRAIN. VERY FEW PALESTINIANS EVEN BOTHER APPLYING FOR BAHRAINI CITIZENSHIP. IN THE PAST SEVERAL YEARS ONLY 1-3 PALESTINIANS HAVE BEEN GRANTED CITIZENSHIP. THERE IS VERY LITTLE INTERMARRIAGE BETWEEN BAHRAINIS AND PALESTINIANS. THERE HAVE BEEN NO VISABLE CHANGES IN THESE FACTORS OVER THE LAST FEW YEARS.  
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## Message Attributes

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